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ABSTRACT

The purpose of "Focus" is to present articles by Utah community college faculty on various curricular and administrative concerns. This issue contains: (1) "Predicting Student Retention," by Nancy M. Smith, which discusses the importance of student assessment as a variable in student retention and presents findings from a study of the relationship of student scores on both the Work Values Inventory and the Self-Directed Search (a self-administered vocational guidance tool) to retention in office occupation programs at Utah Valley Community College (UVCC); (2) "Outcomes Have Feelings," by Gary Parnell, which addresses the emotional outcomes of education and the role of art in emotional education; (3) "Revitalizing General Education," by Pamela Gardner, which discusses the work of a task force created at Salt Lake Community College to revitalize general education and establish an associate of arts degree in humanities; (4) "The Honors Program at UVCC," by Larry Harper, F. Dennis Farnsworth, and Michael Falgoust, which traces the development of the Utah Valley Community College honors program and plans for increasing course offerings; (5) "The Triangle of Teaching Excellence," by Nancy J. Taniguchi, which considers the interrelated roles of faculty, students, and administrators in facilitating teaching excellence through the use of classroom research; (6) "Collaborative Learning Across the Curriculum," by Mary Ann Christison, which lists several assumptions about collaborative learning, reviews research findings on the benefits of the approach, and concludes that the traditional teacher-directed classroom experience should be changed; and (7) "A Letter from Nowhere," by Marilyn Larson, which offers a rebuttal to those who view Utah as "nowhere." (JMC)

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Predicting Student Retention

By Nancy M. Smith

Retention of college students has been a critical issue within the community college environment for many years. In spite of all of the discussion, students still drop out of school before they reach their educational objectives. Research conducted by Lenning (1980) reports that it is not uncommon for colleges and universities to experience drop-out rates ranging from 25 percent to 65 percent of their freshman classes.

Although there is little question that the path to academic achievement is broad at the entrance and narrow at the exit, academicians and researchers continue to contend with a lack of understanding about why college students drop out.

In addition to the educational and societal implications surrounding student drop-out, there are serious budgetary considerations. Retention is a simple matter of economics. The higher the retention rate, the higher the portion of state appropriations for community colleges. When retention rates decline, state funding and appropriations decline proportionately.

The Role Of Assessment

Entrance into colleges and universities is becoming increasingly competitive and the traditional open-door policy of most community colleges in the United States is being challenged by an ever-expanding number of students requesting admission (Stadtman, 1980).

With high demand and limited access to higher education, retention of admitted students is becoming a critical issue for administrators and educators nationwide (Pantages and Creedon, 1978; Ramist, 1981). Success of departments and programs, particularly in the community college, is being measured in part by retention of students and by number of graduates. Programs with poor retention and completion ratios are being questioned (Willner, 1980).

The research literature specific to college student retention generally attempts to identify characteristics that distinguish between college dropouts and those who continue on to complete the programs in which they have enrolled. A common consensus of retention studies is that retention is the result of an extremely intricate interaction among many variables. The one variable, however, that consistently surfaces as having a major, impact on retention of students is student assessment.

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National research studies identify assessment as an important variable in college student retention investigations. There is, however, considerable conflict regarding assessment and instrumentation. With escalating budgetary consideration, increased interest exists among educational administrators in finding test instruments that will effectively predict how students will perform in college.

Initial assessment at the time of college entrance has been the focus of most assessment studies. The standardized tests used in college admissions, however, are generally structured to test academic ability and do not measure interests, vocational preferences, or work values.

Traditional vs. Non-Traditional Assessment Measures

A reasonable question to ask is whether or not traditional "academic" assessment measures are the only suitable measures for determining success or retention in college programs.

The traditional measures include high school or previous college grade point average and SAT or ACT scores. Are there other retention predictors that have not been considered?

Sufficient evidence exists to suggest that measures of work values and vocational interest can substantially discriminate between those choosing various courses or occupations (Holland, 1963; Crites, 1969; Holland, Viernstein, Kou, Karweit, and Blum; 1970).

Testing Non-Traditional Assessment Measures

A four-year field study of office occupation majors was conducted at Utah Valley Community College to see if a predictive model for retention of students could be developed using non-academic assessment measures. Although the intent of the study was to measure retention of office occupation students, the methodology of this study has cross-disciplinary implications and could certainly be duplicated.

Participants in the study included students at UVCC who enrolled during the 1985-86, 1986-87, 1987-88, and 1988-89 school years. A total of 251 Office Administration and Secretarial Technology students participated.

Two well-researched and documented assessment tests were chosen for the study: Donald E. Super's, Work Values Inventory, and John L. Holland's Self-Directed Search.

The WORK VALUES INVENTORY measures both the values which motivate people to work and the satisfactions which are sought in the work place.

The SELF-DIRECTED SEARCH is a self-administered, self-scored, and self-interpreted vocational guidance tool that estimates a person's resemblance to each of six personality types.

Development Of A Predictive Model

Students who participated in the study were tested by the Work Values Inventory and the Self-Directed Search. The intent of the study was to determine if students who remained in school or office occupation professions scored any differently on the two test instruments than students who did not complete the program and were not working in the profession. If a difference could be determined then a further intent of the study was to identify a predictive set of test scores for student retention.

To make this determination, eight student retention groups were identified. Student retention was measured by either (1) graduating with a one - or two-year degree, (2) being on track by having declared an office occupation major and completing more than 30 credit hours, or (3) jobbing out or leaving the program before completion but taking a position in an office occupation. Non-completers were identified as those students who left the office occupation program and profession.

Records of participating students were reviewed to determine (1) declared major, (2) graduation status, (3) number of credits completed, or (4) whether a break in enrollment had occurred. Students who had not graduated or who were not currently enrolled were contacted by telephone to determine their academic and working status.

Results

The results of the study showed that there is indeed a relationship between student scores on the two test instruments and retention in office occupation programs at Utah Valley Community College.

After a statistically significant relationship was determined, a predictive model was developed utilizing a "two-group" discriminant analysis between students who were retained and non-completers. The predictive ability of the model developed may be considered high. The fact that 74.86 percent of the two-year students and 73.27 percent of one-year students were classified correctly indicates the high predictive validity which can be achieved through a model based on non-traditional measures.

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Outcomes Have Feelings

By Gary Parnell

The recently renewed emphasis on measuring the outcomes of education is a welcome development. It is especially gratifying to see that considerable attention is being paid to the most important outcomes education can have even when those outcomes are not always easy to measure in quantitative terms.

Among the many outcomes of education that we can hope to measure, three of the most important are: how students think, how they act and how they feel. Each of these presents a serious challenge, but none is so often ignored yet so important as an assessment of how adequately educated students develop the capacity to feel, the vital capacity to enjoy mature, satisfying and uplifting emotional lives.

Modern culture is suffering from the symptoms of emotional inadequacy. Perceptive thinkers of our time have tried to warn us of the danger in clear language. Nobel Prize winner, Elie Weisel, writing in the most widely read magazine in America, expresses the fear that we have become "a society of emotionally numbed, morally insensitive T.V. watchers" (Weismman 8). John F. Kennedy was fond of pointing out, however, that this "emotional numbness" was not the only symptom of our current malaise. He used to cite the lines from William Butler Yeats' poem "The Second Coming" where the poet warns that, "The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity".

We too often suffer either from the chill of numbed emotions or the fever of diseased and misdirected passion. What should be done? Can anything be done?

I would like to deal with four key concepts as I attempt to address these and other questions about emotion. First, a working definition of emotions, second, the place of emotional education, third, the special place of art in emotional education, and fourth, the special place of emotion in every form of education.

Defining Emotion

The first serious modern exploration of human emotion was undertaken near the end of the 19th century by William James and C.G. Lange. It was their conclusion that "instead of the outward signs of emotions, such as facial expressions and visceral reactions being the result of some prior emotional, neural signal, [they] insisted that our feeling of the bodily changes as they occur is the emotion" (Mandler 219).

In more recent times, Carl Sagan has described our deepest emotions as hormonic or other stimulations of the non-rational limbic segment of the brain (66). James would have it that we feel sad because we cry and Sagan would suggest that we feel fear when a certain

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chemical or physical condition obtains in the animal portion of our brain tissues. In either case emotion is something other than a rational matter subject to our powers of judgment.

What James cannot explain, however, is how people who, through disease or accident cannot cry, or grimace or shiver, still feel sadness, anger and fear. What Sagan seems to pass over is how, under normal circumstances, the chemistry of the brain can still shift in the ways he associates only with emotional states. Still, the notion that emotion is essentially a physiological or chemical phenomenon is a very popular one.

A more commonplace and folksy concept of what feelings may be has been called the "hydraulic theory of emotion" wherein emotions are seen in metaphors related to liquids. We hear, for example, that people have emotions "bottled up" inside them. We are told that we need to "let off some steam." Some people even go so far as to twist Aristotle's famous line about the purging of pity and fear into a kind of "laxative theory of emotion" in which tragic drama serves as the purge.

Another misguided approach to emotion implies that it is something that just happens to us, almost beyond our control. We are "gripped" by emotion, we are "overcome" or "overwhelmed" by passion. Indeed, the term passion is related to the term passive so that even etymology conspires to mislead us into thinking that we are helpless victims of feelings which impose themselves upon us.

More recent theories have posited that emotions have a lot more to do with our own rational judgments than with bodily upsets, liquids under pressure or external forces that we passively suffer and that , in humans, they are centered much more in the rational capacities of the neo-cortex than in either the animal or reptilian sectors of our brains.

That the emotions are essentially thought-centered is not really a new idea, of course. As early as the 17th century Baruch Spinoza held that emotions are essentially thoughts, that is, beliefs or ideas, with bodily feelings incidentally attached and that in their fullest maturity, reason and emotion are identical, united in what he called "the intellectual love of God".

Niettzsche also held that every passion contains its "quantum of reason." (Solomon xix). A fairly recent and complete treatment of the approach I plan to take toward emotions and their outcomes is to be found in Robert C. Solomon, The Passions: The Myth and Nature of Human Emotion.

It is Robert Solomon's thesis that emotions are essentially decisions that we make. Perhaps at this point I should insert a couple of examples to illustrate this concept. Suppose that from behind you where you cannot see, you hear a loud and explosive sound. The sound startles you and immediately becomes the focus of your attention. Of the many possible emotions that could ensue from your experience, which will in fact occur? Will it depend on something inherent in the noise, itself which you must passively react to? Its loudness? Its pitch or timbre? What will permit your reaction to go beyond the point of merely being upset? What will cause it to

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become a specific and definable emotion?

The answer, of course is rational judgement. You must first decide what caused the noise, for what it was intended, what its likely consequences might be. If you have been trying for weeks to get a certain chemical mix to produce a small and harmless explosion, your emotion will be relief and triumph. If you have been dealing with a disruptive middle school chemistry class and you determine that one of the rowdies has played a dangerous trick, you might be angered by the exact same physical stimulus.

According to Jerome Neu "To say that thoughts are 'essential' [to a complete emotional response] is to say, for example, that what is most distinctive about my anger is the belief (roughly) that someone has caused me harm, and that without that belief or something like it my state could not be one of anger" (Neu 1).

We may go even further in demonstrating that events outside our rational thought processes do not account for the full experience of an emotion. Situations themselves do not determine our emotions. We may even have a psychological reaction to a situation or object that does not, in fact exist. We can be as pleased by what we only believe to be the case as we are by what in fact is actually the case. I may be pleased because (as I suppose) I have inherited a fortune, when in reality I have not. It is therefore the belief, what I think, what I have decided to be the case, which is the real basis for my emotional state. And of course if this is the basis of the emotion in those cases where I am wrong in my belief, it is just as surely true in those cases wherein my belief, is well founded. "If it was ever the belief that caused the pleasure it was always the belief that caused the pleasure" (Williams in Neu 158).

If what we feel is at least partially determined by what we know or believe, we can see that emotions are not just things that happen to us, determined by a combination of external stimulus and primitive irrational instincts. They are almost as amenable to sophistication and education as are the reflective rational processes we emphasize so much in our attempts at schooling. We can learn, and we can be taught, to choose among the passions, to improve their adequacy, appropriateness and authenticity.

The Classical Greeks, who invented much of what we call formal education, divided what was worth knowing into three major realms; epistemology or how to think logically and properly, ethics or how to act morally and properly and aesthetics or how to feel and appreciate beauty.

Now, we place great emphasis, and rightly so, on imparting knowledge and logical thought processes to our students. Great rewards go to those who demonstrate that they have their facts straight and can use the formal processes of correct thinking. The so-called "real world" is also quite efficient at rewarding those who know and disciplining those who are ignorant of the facts.

We are not so explicit nor so efficient in instilling ethical values as we are in teaching knowledge and thinking skills. This can be seen from the great number of clever criminals our system produces. Nevertheless, far more people end up with socially acceptable moral behavior than do not and we are fairly clear about what sort of conduct we expect and what will be the consequences for those who flaunt our standards.

The Place of Emotional Education

So, what sort of efforts do we make to teach people how to feel? Can we teach people how to feel? Don't most people already know how to feel? What are we talking about?

Let's back up to the other two realms of learning and see what we mean when we say that they teach students how to do something. We claim that education teaches students how to think. Now, do we mean by that without

training no one would think?

No. What we mean is that education, properly applied, should help a student to think correctly. Do we believe that without the ethical training of our schools, churches and homes no one would know how to, that is no one would be able to act? No. What we mean is that people might not act properly.

And so it is with feelings. Almost everyone can feel, but too few can feel adequately, appropriately or authentically. By adequacy of feeling, I mean we don't always know how deeply to feel. We find ourselves numbed to the starvation of children in the deserts of the Sahel, but outraged to the point of fury if our favorite T.V. program is preempted for a news bulletin. By appropriateness of feeling I mean that we don't know how to properly face a friend dying of AIDS or to react to a rival who has defeated us in a competition or to communicate to our students the emotional satisfaction that drew us to the disciplines we teach today. And by authenticity of feeling I mean that willingness to own our true feelings, or at the very least, the unwillingness to pretend to have feelings that have been borrowed for the occasion, false feelings put on in an attempt to fit in and seem conventional.

I think we have the ability and the obligation to seek more adequate, more appropriate and more authentic feelings as legitimate outcomes of our educational efforts.

But we must be very careful when we deal with the emotions. Emotions are our very involvement with life, what is most personal to us, what provides us with "a sense of self, a sense of worth, a sense of meaning" (Solomon 55). Claude Levi-Strauss has warned us that "to change someone else, whether for better or for worse, is in a sense to destroy him. But to change oneself is to grow."

We must not set out to manipulate or to mold the emotions of our students; we must, instead, give them the tools and the occasions to form evaluate, and sophisticate their own. Not only is this the only ethical way to teach proper feeling, it is also the only workable way to do so. We cannot directly teach feelings; we must provide opportunities for students to learn this vital skill on their own.

Art in Emotional Education

As you will recall, the proper training of feeling was associated by the Greeks with the term "aesthetics." The Greek word for feeling is aisthesis. You may also note that the term "anaesthetic" refers to something which causes you to lose your ability to feel. Still, we traditionally associate the word aesthetics, not with emotions but with beauty and art, with painting, music, poetry and so forth. Does that mean that gaining an appreciation for fine art has some special role in educating the emotions? Yes, it does. It does so in at least two ways.

Art takes on the form of emotions and allows us to "observe" them in representation. This is perhaps best illustrated by the well known ability of music to mimic feeling. It swells and it dampens, it speeds up the pulse and then slows the heart beat, it exalts and it brings low. Music is what it is like to have an emotion. In ways unique to their materials and techniques, the other arts are as well.

Art is also experience, experience that we have at a safe "psychical distance." Art allows us the time and the composure to use our reflective reason on that fleeting, non-reflective, immediate reasoning power that we call emotion and opens up the opportunity for modifications and improvements in our emotional responses.

Let me offer a simplistic example. I am being chased by a bear and I climb a tree and watch the bear's claws reach within inches of the soles of my shoes, I am not likely to take that moment to philosophically ponder the role of fear in my life. Deeply felt emotion is too fundamental to our very being to be dissected and analyzed while we are fully expe-

riencing it. On the other hand, emotion is too fleeting and ephemeral a thing to be adequately assessed while we are not feeling it in some way. What seems to be a dilemma is really an opportunity and, indeed, the occasion for art.

If I attend a well written and well directed play in which the element of fear is dealt with in a serious and artistic manner, I will feel the emotion of fear while knowing that I have no need to act on my feeling other than to explore it, examine it, and be constructively critical of it.

Here we get to what Aristotle probably meant when he spoke of the purging of the emotions. In a good play or other work of great art that is properly understood and appreciated, the emotions go through a kind of purgatory where they are purified or cleared up of all the murkiness and confusion they may have labored with before.

The catharsis we feel when we experience great art is partly the result of a clearing up of how we feel, and how we might feel and how we come to see that we ought to feel.

If we expect our educational experiences to have emotional outcomes then we must realize that emotions are central to the value we place on every other aspect of life and that emotions are at least partly, decisions that we make, and that we can no more trust these decisions to chance than we would logical or moral decisions. We must recognize the traditional role that aesthetics, that is, the appreciation of fine art, has played in the schooling of our feelings and we must stop regarding the area of the curriculum which deals most directly with the most vital portion of our humanity as a frill or an ornament.

The Special Place of Emotion

I would now like to stop asking what you can do for the emotional well being of your students and tell you what the emotions can do for you.

See if the following passage from the Oxford Companion to the Mind has any relevance to your classroom teaching.

"Rather than emotion appearing as an interfering, irrelevant, and chaotic state of affairs, it seems that different kinds of situations (and cognitions) become especially marked if they occur in the 'emotional' visceral context. This notion corresponds with the common experience that emotionally tinged events occupy a special place in our memories" (Mendler 220).

There are a number of ways of introducing emotion into the classroom.

I believe that it is important for teachers to come to understand the emotional relationship they have with the subjects they teach. If you love your subject, if it alternately exasperates and thrills you, if you find some aspects off putting and others seductive, you would do well to communicate these feelings to your students along with the very valuable facts and methods that you already do.

I fear that we too often give to others reasons for our actions which are not the reasons that convinced us. Give your students the real reasons you chose your field of study.

It's an old line, but a true one. Try not to teach only the rules while never letting them play the game. Emotion goes along with participation, real involvement. What ever works in your subject area, be it role playing, debating, simulations, etc. get them emotionally engaged.

One of the most emotionally arousing conditions is conflict. Too often what passes for peace in the classroom is actually the silence of nothing happening. Guided conflict in the form of debate, devil's advocacy, provocative readings and so forth will emotionally tinge the classroom experience and cause it to occupy a special place in our memories.

Finally, I return to an earlier theme. If your subject lends itself to such a treatment, and there are few that don't, make use of our rich cultural heritage in the arts to illustrate, highlight and drive home the principles of your discipline.

I appreciate the efforts we are making

to assess the outcomes of our educational efforts and I especially appreciate those who are sensitive to the importance of assessing those outcomes which are not easily measured. Many outcomes are important, but surely none is more important than that educated people be capable of appropriate, adequate and authentic emotion.

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Revitalizing General Education

By Pamela Gardner

On October 1, 1987, Salt Lake Community College was awarded a federal grant of 2.37 million dollars through Title III to strengthen the institution. One of the five activities involves the revitalizing of general education and the establishment of an AA degree in Humanities. With the name change in April 1987 from Utah Technical College to Salt Lake Community College and with the new role assignment of offering the Associate of Arts degree, Salt Lake Community College was primed for major changes in its curriculum. The changes involved an identification of philosophy, people, and process.

The change process began with the identification of an Activity Director and an Activity Team (which included the director). The Activity Team was selected based on their interest in the project and their expertise in a wide range of subjects. Roselyn Kirk, Verlaine McPhie and Grant Smart were chosen from those faculty who expressed a desire to work closely on the project. They were given partial teaching loads with the grant paying for substitute faculty. The team met twice weekly for six months. They also visited four community colleges located in California, Nevada and Arizona. The Activity Director and two of the team members attended the AACJC Conference held in 1988.

The team reviewed over 170 books and articles during the six months they worked together. They were also responsible for identifying major philosophical issues and recommending possible curricular designs to the Task Force. Overseeing the direction of the project is the responsibility of the General Education Task Force—comprised of approximately 20 faculty members and administrators from across the campus. As the Activity Team synthesized their research into a coherent philosophy and criteria, the Task Force then reviewed those recommendations and modified them until they reached agreement. The resulting documents are designed to better prepare all students with a worthwhile general education experience.

In addition to the work of the Activity Team and the Task Force, Chester H. Case, a national author and president of Los Medanos Community College in Pittsburg, California, served as our consultant. President Case visited the college twice during the first year of the grant. His expertise in developing a general education program was invaluable. He provided us with direction and vision along with the practical example of how general education works at Los Medanos.

Philosophy

The General Education Curriculum at SLCC was in a similar condition as found at many community colleges. Until now, general education has been a cafeteria-style list of offerings. While the faculty and administration have sought to develop unity in the program, the end result has lacked cohesiveness

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and overall purpose. Jeffrey Lukenbill and Robert McCabe of Miami-Dade indicate that "most colleges do not have a sound foundation for their general education programs. A primary reason is that those colleges have general education requirements and not general education programs. A true general education program will have four essential components: (1) a rationale, (2) goals, (3) courses and objectives for attaining the goals, and (4) evaluation." (Johnson, 1982)

Ernest Boyer in College: the Undergraduate Experience (1987) indicates that general education needs to be more than each course, standing alone. "But it stretches the imagination to say a blend of Italian, health education and economics—or most other randomly selected combinations we observed—offers a general education worthy of the name. . .The great obstacle to general education is the fragmentation of specialization. . .Bridges between disciplines must be built and the core program must be seen ultimately as relating the curriculum consequentially to life."

Boyer says that general education must overcome departmental narrowness. General education means "a curriculum that encourages students to venture 'across the disciplinary boundaries but not without a map in hand. . .As students see how the content of one course relates to that of others, they begin to make connections, and in so doing gain not only a more integrated view of knowledge, but also a more authentic view of life." (Boyer, 1987)

Since we were establishing a program, the Task Force defined general education as a holistic endeavor whose fundamental purpose is "the integration of attitudes, skills and broad abstractions of knowledge. The program will encourage students to be active and creative agents in the life-long process of inquiry, evaluation and decision making." All general education courses will be non-majors classes and will provide an introductory overview with no prerequisites. The Task Force also identified six criteria which all general education courses must meet. They are: communication, creativity, critical thinking, esthetics, social web and substance. Since one of the goals of the criteria is to show the interconnectedness of knowledge, courses should be interdisciplinary in nature. They also need to be pluralistic.

The Task Force felt that basic literacy skills in reading, writing and computation were requisite of all community college graduates, regardless of the length of the program of study. They recommended that Salt Lake Community College identify basic competencies for all student. They also recommended s system of remediation for those students needing help in aquiring basic competencies.

The Task Force identified three categories for classes in the AA and AS degrees. While parts of the categories existed before, the division of classes into the three groups was new. The three categories are: core academic skills which include competencies in reading, writing, mathematics, computer literacy, physical education and American Institutions; general education courses which include requirements in Humanities, Social Science, Physical Science, Life Science and Interdisciplinary courses; and major courses. The committee also recommended that interdisciplinary courses be included in AAS and diploma programs. Programs lasting less than nine months should also include general education which is designed specifically for the program.

People

Our consultant, President Chester H. Case, recommended that we identify four specific groups of people: visionaries, planners, implementors and maintainers. Lindquist (1978) indicates that "planned change requires the integration of several strategies, the combination of several roles and skills, and the establishment of various services designed to facilitate adaptive development." Clifton Conrad, in "Initiating and Implement-

ing Institutional Change," notes that faculty support is essential since they have major responsibility for deciding upon and implementing changes in general education. There must also exist strong administrative leadership. Many view administrators "as the most important group in influencing the academic program." (Conrad, 1981) "Administrators can facilitate the process of change by providing channels of communication among groups, bringing a shared sense of purpose, using a keen sense of timing, and keeping things moving in an orderly fashion without appearing to force an issue. Moreover, they also serve as a separate power bloc, both in terms of initiating changes in general education and exerting influence over the process." (Conrad, 1978)

Both key faculty and administrators function as visionaries as members of the Activity Team and the Task Force. Members were selected based on their expertise and their willingness to make the necessary time commitment. Faculty who were not members of the Task Force were included in the planning stage in an effort to "expand the conversation." Since we are just finishing the planning stage and moving to the implementing stage, others will be involved in the process. The activity has also sought input from others in the community and from representatives from other colleges and universities in the state to help with the development of the curriculum.

Process

The specific objectives of the grant included identification of 20 existing classes to be redesigned and 40 new courses to be added over the five years. Those courses would be in both the general education program and the AA degree in Humanities. Monies were identified to provide faculty with retraining activities and curriculum development time.

Since we wanted to know what classes students thought were important, we decided to survey a representative group. The Activity Team met with Curtis Youngman, a member of the marketing department. With his help, the Activity Team drafted a survey instrument which his class administered in personal interviews to 697 students. They surveyed both day and evening students with a cross-section of majors. Most of the students responded that they would like additional offerings in general education. Some specific classes mentioned with some frequency were music, philosophy, cultural anthropology, art, humanities, history and additional psychology. The marketing classes also conducted a focus group of alumni, using the same questionnaire.

The Activity Team surveyed the literature. We also completed three separate ERIC searches on specific topics. After review of each article or book, the specific reviewer would then write a synopsis of the information and share it with the rest of the team. Those reviews are on file in the activity office.

The Task Force divided into four subcommittees which included: Curriculum, Faculty Development, AA Degree in Humanities, and Ad Hoc for Articulation. Additional members of the faculty were invited to participate on the sub-committees. Since we wanted a strong link with the faculty senate, some of the faculty were selected specifically because of their senate assignments.

Members of the Activity Team met with each department in General Education along with other departments who expressed interest. Departments offering general education courses were asked to identify those courses most in need of revision to meet the new general education criteria. The departmental lists were reviewed by the Curriculum Subcommittee which then identified the 20 existing courses which would be redesigned with grant monies. The Task Force had final approval for the classes.

Faculty were encouraged to submit curriculum proposals for new classes for both

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general education and the AA degree in Humanities which was designed by another sub-committee and recommended by the Task Force. The Curriculum Sub-committee has been reviewing proposals to identify 40 new courses and the faculty who will be funded to develop those courses. Equipment and supplies will also be funded by the grant if a course is approved. The Task Force will review the work of the committee and make final recommendations. All courses supported by the grant will be placed in a matrix which will identify the quarter for curriculum development, pilot testing of the course and submission to the faculty senate curriculum committee for final approval.

The Sub-committee for the AA degree in Humanities included other members of the Humanities Department who were not members of the Task Force. The sub-committee met to review programs in community colleges across the nation. After the review, the committee defined the role of Humanities at Salt Lake Community College. They also identified the specific structure for the AA degree in Humanities.

The Sub-committee for Faculty Development met to plan a two-day symposium on general education which will involve the entire campus community. Other development activities will be planned for later this year.

The Ad Hoc Committee will meet with representatives from other colleges and universities to help expedite the articulation process.

Summary

The Title III grant is having far-reaching implications for all curriculum at Salt Lake Community College. As general education becomes a program with specific goals and objectives, it will impact all other academic programs at the college. All courses currently offered for general education credit will meet the criteria which will mean a complete revision of the curriculum. Other programs, after they see the rewards to student and faculty, will, hopefully, participate in the revision of their courses.

Title III has provided the monetary means and the philosophical impetus for SLCC to strengthen its general education program. That strengthening is congruent with the recommendations of the AACJC Commission on the Future of Community Colleges (1988) which states that "strengthening general education is one of the most urgent obligations community colleges confront. Specifically, the aim of a community college education must be not only to prepare students for productive careers, but also to take them beyond their narrow interests, broaden their perspectives, and enable them to live lives of dignity and purpose... This is an awesome agenda. It calls for more than idealized statements in catalogs. The larger perspective we have in mind means more than a grab bag of unrelated courses. We are convinced that an effective general education is one that provides students a more integrated view of knowledge and a more authentic view of life. This should be the goal of every community college in the nation." It is certainly the goal of Salt Lake Community College.

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The Honors Program At UVCC

Larry Harper, F. Dennis Farnsworth and Michael Falgoust

The genesis of the Utah Valley Community College Honors Program was a 1984 discussion between the Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. Lucille Stoddard and General Studies instructor F. Dennis Farnsworth. In that discussion Dr. Stoddard expressed her long-standing desire to begin an honors program at the College. It had long been her conviction that a pressing need existed at the College for valid developmental experiences for gifted students as well as for the rank and file of the studentbody. She was particularly concerned that at UVCC we were devoting significant resources at the remedial level (typical of community colleges) but very little at the upper end of the achievement continuum.

Mr. Farnsworth agreed with her observations and then realized that in so doing had volunteered for an additional responsibility: to be a founding director of the program!

In retrospect, the unfolding of the Honors Program seems to have been a natural and logical process. In 1984, however, we had only a notion of what it should be. The passing of time, a survey of needs of the College, and the evolution of organizational structures (the Honors Program Advisory and Planning Committee, for example) have given lift to what had then been but an idea. Dr. Stoddard allowed the Director considerable latitude in starting a program that would generally meet her need: something extra for high-achieving students.

The first six months of the existence of the Honors Program was a one-man show, and it was lonely. But things picked up. And between the October 1984 official announcement of an Honors Program and the November 8, 1985, first meeting of its Advisory and Planning Committee, four important initiatives were set in motion: 1) the sponsorship of an honors class, which would be offered beginning Winter 1985 and for each Winter Quarter thereafter; 2) the conducting of an assessment of the honors needs of the College; 3) the successful sponsorship of the first annual Spring Event (an activity that has, in fact, become annual); and 4) the formation and actual convening of an Honors Program Advisory and Planning Committee to oversee the functions of the program and guide it as it evolves.

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First Honors Class

The first class was a seminar held once a week in the home of Dr. Stoddard, who was also the instructor. Selected students from all majors were invited to enroll, and they responded enthusiastically. The class was cozy, relatively small, and reading/writing intensive — all in the best tradition of honors. Guest speakers appeared and lectured with conviction. Students responded with penetrating questions. They were then required to submit written responses, which their instructor responded to with her own philosophical, mechanical, and content observations — once again, in the best tradition of honors. Unsolicited testimonials attested that the class was both one of the most rigorous students had had as well as one of the most valuable.

As for the needs assessment, no honors program would be successful that did not address the concerns of the academic leaders — the department coordinators. Therefore, before any additional courses were brought on line and before any organizational structures were developed, coordinators were surveyed to learn their perception of honors. Some of the questions asked included: What should the primary aim of an honors program be? Scholarly challenge? Recognition of outstanding students? Both? Neither? By what method(s) should students be recruited into the program? Why academic and other types of activities are appropriate? Should certain sections of existing classes be designated honors classes? If so, in what way or ways would they differ from other sections? More work? Higher standards? What other comments and suggestions do you have?

A complete tabulation of the results of the survey is beyond the scope of this paper. However, several major points did come through. The first was that coordinators were virtually all of the belief that honors programs do belong at community colleges. We were legitimate! A second major point was that honors classes should entail more work and higher standards of excellence. The third principle that emerged was that honors students should be students whose GPA's indicated high levels of ability and application.

We were to proceed slowly during the ensuing months in actually evolving honors structures. As we did, we kept in mind the kinds of honors endeavors that coordinators would support.

Annual Spring Event

One activity that gave the program heightened visibility was the first annual Spring Event. Both Dr. Stoddard and Director Farnsworth wished to have some scholarly activity on campus that would signal the Honors presence as well as impart something of worth. One of the faculty members, the resident authority on Chinese affairs, was approached and asked to present his lecture on the Sino-Soviet Conflict. This he did, and the response was overwhelming. Afternoon lectures at community colleges do not typically generate high levels of attendance and participation. This one, however, was highly successful, drawing students, faculty, and administration alike. All were stimulated, knowledge of global events increased, and the lecturer had an audience (what better arrangement for someone who likes to talk!)

In attendance at the Spring Event was L. Michael Falgoust of Special Instructional Programs — a UVCC faculty member. Mr. Falgoust met with Director Farnsworth following the lecture, expressing an interest in honors and volunteering to help out. Aware of the need for an advisory committee, the Director invited him to become its first member. He agreed, and shortly thereafter received a letter from Dr. Stoddard appointing him chair of the Committee, where he has been indispensable — the right position at the right time.

Advisory and Planning Committee

When Mr. Falgoust accepted the appointment to chair the Honors Advisory and Planning Committee, he became responsible for

the planning, developing, and directing of the program. The Committee consists of College faculty and representatives from the College administration and local high schools and acts in an advisory capacity as a part of the regular College program. Authority to function comes directly from the Academic Vice President, and reports are made directly back to her.

In the beginning, the Honors Program was not funded as a part of the regular College budget. Dr. Stoddard's office provided any necessary funding for items such as printing, postage, and advertising through the Discretionary Fund. Committee members worked without remuneration on a voluntary basis. Not until the Program had been in operation three years was it given line item status in the regular College budget. At the same time, the Program Director was given one-quarter release time.

Survey of Student Needs

Before the Honors Program could really be of service to the students, it was necessary to conduct a survey to learn the students' needs. Once this information was collected and analyzed, the Committee had a basis on which to build the Honors Mission Statement. We took great care in developing this Statement, modeling it after many successful programs from other institutions. We included in our statement ideas unique to our particular College and the overall vision of our college in the community. We have updated this statement as needs have dictated and feel the Mission Statement outlined on pages 3 and 4 of the Honors Brochure details this well. We have massaged it to the point where our students are not boxed in or tied down in order to allow them an opportunity to show their excellence and ability to achieve high scores in their academic endeavors.

One of the tasks of the Advisory and Planning Committee was to develop and write the Honors Brochure that advertises the Program, presents the Mission Statement, and outlines the admissions requirements, including application information. After the Mission Statement and Honors criteria had been identified, the Committee set out to develop courses and select instructors. Following the success of Dr. Stoddard's Business Management Seminar, we petitioned the faculty and requested proposals for additional courses. Additionally, we scanned our catalog and identified courses that lent themselves to academic excellence and the mission of the Honors Program. We received several proposals for review and invited interested instructors to appear before the Committee to interview as to their expertise, and also to give their suggestions. Pages 7 through 10 of the Brochure outline the courses and give brief descriptions of the topics covered in the Program.

One of the first Honors courses to be developed came from the English program. Currently, UVCC students are required to complete a two-quarter English composition course of instruction. This seemed an excellent opportunity to introduce an Honors writing course: an accelerated, highly demanding course that would meet the graduation requirements of Freshman composition in one quarter. The result was English 255H: Advanced College Writing and Rhetoric.

Larry Harper, one of the English instructors at the College, was invited to teach this

class, and he found that first quarter to be perhaps one of the most stimulating he had ever encountered. Because the students were expected to meet at least two of the six criteria (listed on page 5 of the Brochure), the caliber of students was generally more mature, more probing, and less likely to be satisfied with easy answers. Mr. Harper soon found this Honors writing class to be one of his most demanding, most challenging, but at the same time most rewarding teaching assignments.

Limited Class Size

Why? One of the primary reasons was that Honors classes limit enrollment to 20 students. Anyone who has ever taught a college writing class knows that one of the greatest obstacles is a large class size. Fifteen to twenty students make for a nearly ideal teaching environment. Such class size invites a greater teacher-student as well as student-student intimacy. And a real sense of community begins to develop.

Because the students are generally more mature, class discussions tend to become more lively. Students will frequently challenge the instructor, but interestingly, not defiantly, but questioningly, wanting — demanding — to know why an author — or the instructor — holds a certain view. This type of maturity continues in student-student disagreements as well. They may argue strongly and vigorously with each other, but it is almost always done respectfully, not personally, and with a genuine curiosity.

One anecdote worth relating demonstrates the curiosity and maturity of the students in at least one Honors class. Evidently a mix-up occurred when a scheduled visitor did not show up. When the instructor did arrive — some 25 minutes after the start of the class — he found that the class had simply gone on without him: two of the students were at the front of the class, using the chalkboard and leading a discussion on the day's reading assignment.

Another incident involved an Honors student from the previous quarter's class. One afternoon the student came rushing into the instructor's office and said, "Mr. Harper, I've decided that I'm going to be a writer. I just wanted to let you know." The student was a business major, and he didn't mean that he was changing careers; what he meant was that he had discovered that writing was a method of figuring things out for himself, of articulating his ideas into clearly organized, logical processes. He had just wanted to tell his former instructor that he now considered writing a major method of thinking and problem solving for himself.

Of course, this is not the type of thing that happens every day. But for the instructor, teaching an Honors class can be an exciting experience — an opportunity to see dynamic changes in students and to re-evaluate one's own teaching approaches.

Future Plans

The future plans and goals of UVCC's Honors Program include continuing to increase course offerings. Currently, we are in the process of trying some unique ideas, such as developing individual learning programs when there are not enough students to participate in a full course section. Additionally, we would like to increase the recognition of our Honors students with activities such as an annual Honors Banquet. Our College has been invited to investigate the opportunities associated with being a chartered chapter of the National Honor Fraternity, Phi Theta Kappa. The ultimate goal is to have a full Honors Program that provides the opportunity for the graduate to be known as an Honors Program graduate and to receive that full recognition.

The Honors Program at UVCC has expanded significantly since its conception. But we have done so methodically — building, as we were able, a program full of integrity. Staffed mostly by volunteers, it is also extremely low budget. We have succeeded in creating a Program that we can be pleased with.

The Triangle of Teaching Excellence

by Dr. Nancy J. Taniguchi

Political science uses a model of the "iron triangle" to explain how legislation is created. The triangle's three corners usually sport labels of "Executive Agencies," "Interest Groups" and, Congress," although other variations exist. Through the interaction of these groups — supplying information, applying pressure, imagining solutions — the nation's legislative mandate is supposedly fulfilled.

In Utah's community colleges, we have a different kind of mandate; to effectively educate as many of our citizens as wish to enter our institutions. Therefore, I propose another "Iron Triangle" to illustrate a potentially productive relationship between faculty, students, and administration. They are the corners of this new triangle, which, with optimum cooperation, could facilitate teaching excellence within Utah's community colleges.

Assessment as a Solution

The literature on teaching excellence and its attainment is rich and varied. Of late, concern has centered on our "nation at risk" — those students who like Johnny, can't read, and certainly cannot keep up with their counterparts in Japan or Scandinavia. The latest solution has begun with assessment. High school exit exams, once unheard of, are now commonplace. A recent editorial in the Salt Lake Tribune berated the State Legislature and the Office of Education for allegedly failing to make a nation-wide math test available to Utah students — even at the cost of $140,000. Supposedly, our youth would have performed well in comparison to their national counterparts, providing another inducement for industry to settle in Utah. Excellence in education has become, not just a goal in itself, but an important economic consideration.

This assessment trend not only extends to students, but to faculty. At College of Eastern Utah, each faculty member is evaluated by the students in each class each quarter. These evaluations then serve as part of the basis for retention, tenure, or release, further stimulating high teaching standards. Clearly, we of Utah's community colleges are committed to the idea of teaching excellence, but a method of implementation is either evanescent, too expensive, or buried in the paperwork generated by the evaluation process itself. Administrators could directly improve teaching, first of all, by streamlining assessment techniques.

Is there a remedy to the problem of attaining teaching excellence? A new approach has recently been devised by Dr. K. Patricia Cross of the University of California, Berkeley, which she presented at the Annual Conference of the League for Innovation in Community Colleges at San Francisco on October 26, 1987. She and her colleague, Dr. Thomas Angelo, have recently completed a book entitled Handbook of Classroom Assessment Techniques, containing their method for what they call Classroom Research. Like most proposals for teaching excellence, they focus on the faculty as the key to education. First I would like to review

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their techniques, originally developed when the pair was at Harvard University. Then, I will outline my own views on the contributions of students and administration, as well as faculty, which I feel complete the "iron triangle" of teaching excellence.

Dr. Cross' system of Classroom Research is predicated on the notion that those who know best what goes on in the classroom are the teachers, and that they need to be directly involved in instructional improvement. Too often they are simply branded as the problem, or told to implement solutions imposed by administrators. She also notes that college teachers are not taught to teach; instead they pick up what techniques they know largely from attending the classes of their own graduate professors. She then proposes four basic steps for exciting college teachers about the study of pedagogy.

Four Basic Steps

First, teachers should formulate the questions that direct the research, rather than seeking answers to inquiries posed by others.

Second, teachers need to make their goals and objectives explicit, and receive clear (and I might add, prompt) feedback on their achievement of these goals.

Third, the conduct of classroom research, following the far more extensive outline in her book, may provide the intellectual stimulus for growth so necessary to all teaching professionals.

Fourth, classroom research can be performed by any dedicated college teacher. The purpose is not statistical analysis, but to discover what one teacher conveys to one group of students in one specific course, and to find ways to improve the process.

For those of you interested in implementing the method so briefly sketched here, I would like to refer you to the book mentioned earlier in this article, and to a workshop at Berkeley during the second week of June. However, I would like to expand the scope of this paper to touch on areas only briefly mentioned, or absent from Dr. Cross' study. And I need to be more specific about community colleges in Utah.

Our state has to meet some powerful challenges in the next decade, which will gave a significant impact on community colleges. Put bluntly, we can expect a lot more students and not much money. As James R. Moss, Utah's superintendent of Public Instruction, noted two weeks ago, public school enrollment rose 34% in the last ten years, as compared to a 10% decrease nationwide. The State Legislature has been reluctant to provide funds to keep up with this growth. As the "bulge" now found in the elementary grades hits college age in the 1990's, the community colleges will have to pick up the greatest number of new students. Therefore, to maintain the present level of educational excellence, much less improve it, all those involved in higher education must be willing to cooperate to achieve a common goal.

Presumably, this goal is to provide a quality education for all those within our state borders who seek it. Obviouslv, the definition of "quality" varies, as the sponsors of the recent tax initiatives elucidated when they

defined a teaching load as contact hours, and saw research as a waste of the taxpayers' dollar. However, since none of us are employed at research institutions, and our contact hours are among the highest in the nation, we can narrow our definition somewhat.

Let's presume, like Dr. Cross, that the teachers are the best judges of quality, and that we design our courses to meet the needs we perceive. Dr. Cross is currently working on a Teaching Goals Inventory to clarify these needs, but preliminary research at Miami-Dade Community College has revealed two commonly-shared "clusters" of goals, and others less focused. The two areas which concerned teachers in all areas were to improve the level of students' cognitive skills, and to improve their overall academic performance. Other goals tended to be discipline-related. However, teachers have been teaching in the absence of a statistically-based assessment inventory for years, and those of us who are products of a more haphazard system seem none the worse for it. So, let's assume that teachers have goals and that they have some idea of how to reach them.

Improving Performance

Accepting the assumption that teachers are the main conduit of education, how can students and administration aid teachers' performance? Since the educational process most directly involves a classroom experience, students should be empowered to improve their own learning situation. The first rules for the student are the same old saws: they should attend classes and do their homework. However, we have all had the unhappy experience, as a student, of coming away from a class unsure of what we were supposed to be learning. Dr. Robert C. Wilson, also of the University of California, developed a technique known as "Minute Papers" which has been adopted at other institutions. Simply, in the last few minutes of the class, students were asked to answer two questions: "What is the most important thing you learned today? What questions remain uppermost in your mind as we conclude this class session"? One presumes the results might be far more revealing if the replies were anonymous. As for doing homework (especially advance reading), directive questions might be especially helpful. The President of Miami-Dade Community College has suggested test banks filed in computers which students would have to answer before class; all sorts of follow-up are possible with this electronic approach. Those of us who lack such sophisticated equipment can nonetheless try the paper and pencil approach. For example, how would your involvement in this session have varied if I had mentioned at the beginning that I will have a brief quiz over this material at the end of my talk?

Diverse Goals

Naturally, this particular assessment approach does nothing to stimulate students' desire to learn; it only puts them in fear of a bad grade. One of the problems the assessment approach does not tackle is that teachers goals do not always match those of the students. Most of the classes I teach at College of Eastern Utah fill some requirement. Therefore, the vast majority of students enter my courses just to get done and get out, without any real desire to learn any more about history once that last bluebook is completed. We get our share of those looking for mates, deferring a job experience, or simply confused about what the future may bring. Therefore, one of the additional goals for our community colleges is to capture students' interest, for we all know that only through interested intellectual involvement can optimum learning take place.

Involved students take more of a creative approach, and, in this area, I have learned much from CEU's award-winning forensics coach, Neil Warren. I think he may have wanted to stimulate his team, but, for whatever reason, he once made an eloquent appeal to the Humanities Division to demand more

oral work from the students in our classes. Partly out of desperation (I didn't have all my lectures written that first year), I took his advice. As a result, in almost all of my classes the students have to speak before their peers; sometimes evaluating primary and secondary sources, debating political controversies, analyzing economic issues, or playing the role of a famous figure ranging from Sigmund Freud to Indira Gandhi. Of course, many suffer from stage fright. Sometimes that can be overcome by allowing them to sit behind a table with their group, rather than stand alone at the front of the class. Even if this doesn't help, I remind them that some day they will be in a meeting and really want to make themselves heard. They are better off getting some practice, now, in the relatively sheltered atmosphere of the classroom.

Involvement in Learning

Through this process, and others you could devise, students get to know each other better and seem less inhibited about class discussions and asking questions when they don't understand. Creating such an opportunity for students to speak up does help to involve them in learning. It also helps to distract their attention from the physical charms of the other class members, at least for a while.

Just as students perform better when they are directly involved in learning, teachers perform better when they are directly involved in educational decisions. I have already mentioned Dr. Cross' suggestion that classroom assessment questions be formulated by teachers, not administrators. In addition, she calls for clear feedback. Part of that can be obtained from techniques like "Minute Papers;" other responses can come from some sort of classroom evaluation process. Currently, we still rely on students to evaluate teachers in their classes through a formal questionnaire. However, when I taught overseas, each teacher was part of a three-person evaluation team. We took turns visiting each other's classes to seek responses to a set of questions agreed on beforehand. The purpose was improvement; since we all evaluated each other, we could actually ask for help with certain classroom problems. It might be valuable to involve administrators in some similar process. As it is, they make decisions based largely on student input, which can hurt a good teacher saddled with a vindictive clique who threatens to "get even" for bad grades. In any event, the results of any evaluation process must be returned promptly to the teachers. I have worked in a system where feedback took over a year. One was often in the midst of innocently repeating previous mistakes when they were identified as such.

Involvement of Teachers

Beyond the perpetual problem of evaluation, administrators have an obligation to involve their teachers in the education process, just as the best teachers involve their students. I was appalled at the response to House Bill 27 in the recent legislative session. The Utah State Board of Regents and the vast majority of the college presidents were opposed to allowing a single faculty member to sit on each college's institutional council. In my opinion, until they are willing to concede us this small voice in institutional affairs (just as the students are currently represented), they have no right to demand that we refine our classroom techniques. That's the cardinal rule of a triangle — the three angles together form the whole. One corner — in this case, administration - cannot say, "Yes, we want faculty to be part of the process sometimes, but only when it suits us." If Utah truly wishes to improve college teaching, it must be an overall effort. One sector cannot be isolated from the communication process which should benefit all.

Faculty Development

There's another good reason to involve faculty as much as possible in the educational process: lack of money. This connection may not seem readily apparent, but, in the up coming years when classes grow larger and budgets grow slowly (if at all), other sorts of incentives will have to be used to keep faculty

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committed to their chosen task. Dr. Cross believes that classroom research will fill the professionals' need for inquiry and intellectual challenge. It may for some, but will not for all. (Nothing is that broad a panacea.) Because Utah's community colleges offer salaries consistently in the lowest third of the nation, we need to offer other incentives to teach here. Faculty development is one — the chance to travel to professional meetings or conduct research related to one's teaching field. Weber State College has recently improved its position in this regard by obtaining a million-dollar grant from a banking family, exclusively for faculty development. The administration of each community college could greatly improve teaching excellence if they could obtain similar largesse for each of our institutions. The acquisition of faculty development funds should be a primary goal of all our development officers.

Finally, administration can aid faculty, and improve teaching excellence, by offering other means of development that may vary widely with each institution. At College of Eastern Utah, due primarily to our location on the beautiful Colorado Plateau, we offer a Natural Science Excursion and a Wilderness Program every spring that involves several faculty from many campus departments. As part of a comprehensive education package, students and faculty not only meet for regular classes, but take camping trips, back packs, and a river run. I, personally, am looking eagerly forward to hiking the Grand Gulch at the beginning of May. This incentive keeps many faculty fresh and interested where otherwise they may have long ago grown lackluster. It is to the credit of CEU's administration that they continually support these creative learning programs.

Cooperation Needed

In summary, the "iron triangle" of teaching excellence necessitates cooperation among the chief players in education. Faculty need to interest students; students need to become involved. Administration must provide means for faculty development; faculty needs to relate that experience to the classroom. All three groups should have some voice in the formation of institutional policy, done most appropriately at the Institutional Council level. There should be some sort of assessment process to determine how well we all do our jobs, but it should not be limited solely to students and faculty. Administration also needs to be held to account, and I have yet to see a formal method to reach this goal. Maybe overall student achievement and faculty retention can indicate the level of administrative performance. With a clear case of the triangle at work toward the common goal of teaching excellence, Utah's community colleges will indeed fulfill their paramount reason to be.

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Collaborative Learning Across The Curriculum

By Mary Ann Christinson

The essence of collaborative learning can be characterized in the following Chinese proverb.

> Tell me, and I'll forget
> Show me, and I'll remember
> Involve me, and I'll learn.

Collaborative learning can be defined as a strategy for the classroom that is used to 1) increase motivation and retention, 2) help students develop a positive image of self and others, 3) provide a vehicle for critical thinking and problem solving, and 4) encourage collaborative social skills (Calderon, 1986).

Assumptions About Collaborative Learning

1. *Collaborative skills must be learned.* Humans are not born instinctively knowing how to cooperate with others. Collaborative skills must be taught just like skills in math, writing and reading. Because most students have not been taught to work effectively with others, they cannot do so. Traditional forms of education do not encourage cooperative activity; students work independently and compete for recognition with their peers.

Even though collaborative skills are not generally used in traditional forms of education, they are, nevertheless, important.

There is no way to overemphasize the importance of social skills. They are keystones to building and maintaining a stable family, a successful career and a stable group of friends (Johnson and Johnson, 1975).

This assumption has some strong implications for teaching. If you decide to try cooperative learning, you have to do more than put your students in small groups! The skills necessary need to be taught. In order to teach these skills, teachers must know what needs to be taught. This requires a commitment to finding out more about collaborative learning. Teachers need to know such things as the levels of cooperative learning (Johnson and Johnson 1975), strategies for group dynamics (Christison and Bassano, 1987), steps in teaching collaborative learning (Calderon, 1985), guidelines for teacher as facilitator, roles for students and teachers, and processing strategies. How can students be expected to work together on complicated tasks in small groups if it still takes them 15 minutes to simply form their groups? Teachers who want successful collaborative learning ventures with their students need to be well versed in the literature and application of collaborative learning techniques.

2. *The physical and spacial arrangement affects collaborative work.* Activities need to be structured so students can cooperate and work

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together. Face-to-face not back-to-back seating arrangements are necessary. This is common sense; yet, it is difficult to implement. We have long been dominated by traditional forms of learning. This is evidenced by the design of many of our buildings—tiered lecture halls with seats bolted to the floor. The physical facilities on most of our campuses make the implementation of collaborative learning an interesting challenge.

3. *Peer support and group dynamics are the keys to success in collaborative learning*. It is the members of the group who determine how well a group will function. Group members must be committed to and understand the process they are involved in, in order for collaborative learning to work.

Research on Collaborative Learning

1. *Academic Achievement*. Of the 27 reported studies done investigating the effects of collaborative learning programs on student learning, 19 show a significant positive effect on student learning. Wheeler (1977) found that student effect weighed heavily on these results. Students who preferred to cooperate learned best in a collaborative program. Students who preferred to compete did best in a competitive program. Since most programs are competitive, where does that leave the students who wish to collaborate? Studies also support the concept that the more tightly structured methods of collaborative group work will have the strongest effects on basic skills. This means that if teachers want their students to make maximum gains in collaborative experiences, the experiences must be planned and structured. Higher order cognitive skills are best improved by the more open-ended methods used in collaborative techniques.

2. *Intergroup Relations.* Students in traditional classrooms make few friendship choices outside of their own racial, religious or ethnic groups (Gerhard and Miller, 1975). Collaborative learning techniques place students of different races or ethnic backgrounds into settings where they can work together and get to know each other.

Allport's Contact Theory (1954) holds that if individuals of different races are to develop positive relationships, they must engage in frequent cooperative activity (Slavin, 1979).

3. *Self-esteem.* Students in collaborative groups feel better liked by their classmates because of the increased opportunities to interact. When students feel they are making significant contributions to the group process and these contributions are valued by the group members, they are more likely to feel successful academically. Improved self-esteem is an outcome of cooperative activity.

Although there are many unanswered questions in the research, Slavin (1981) believes that it is possible to say that collaborative methods are effective in a wide range of outcomes. The methods are practical and acceptable with large numbers of teachers today. The research supports the usefulness of collaborative learning for improving attitudes towards learning, academic achievement and self-esteem.

Need for Change

Making the change from a teacher-directed to a collaborative learning classroom can be difficult. I have been teaching for almost twenty years. Much of what I was doing in the classroom was almost automatic, second nature to me. It felt good and right; I did not want to change. It was frightening and intimidating to think about trying something new, to give up the security of things I already knew and felt safe with. Yet, we cannot grow and develop if we do not change. No good teacher would resist change knowing it would harm the students to continue with the status quo. Common sense, research, and practical experience suggest a change is in order. Nevertheless, change is difficult. I am reminded of some comforting thoughts that

Einstein gave to his colleagues (Zukov. 1979).

"Creating a new theory is not like destroying an old barn and erecting a skyscraper in its place. It is rather like climbing a mountain, gaining new and wider views, discovering unexpected connections between our starting point and its rich environment. But the point from which we started out still exists and can be seen, although it appears smaller and forms only a tiny part of our broad view, gained by the mastery of the obstacles on our adventurous way up."

We are all involved in many different groups during our lives. As children, we become involved in neighborhood groups--games, clubs, etc. We progress to clubs and groups at school and professional organizations. Of course, there is also the most immediate and essential small group--the family. In this country, every decision that is not a personal decision is made by a group. We believe in and endorse this system day after day. The textbooks we use were probably selected by a group, the number of days of instruction our students receive is decided by a group, our salary is decided by a group. All of these things are part of a group process. When we teach students how to work effectively in a group setting, we are teaching them more than just the day's information, we are teaching them about life and how to live more successfully.

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A Letter From Nowhere

By Marilyn Larson

When I was a sophomore at the University of Pennsylvania nineteen years ago, I spent a particularly hilarious evening with a few of my dormitory friends. Cynical of mind and frosted of hair, we were all listening to a girl from Kansas—one with a sister at Briarcliff and another at Yale, mind you—regale us with tales of her brother, the youngest and least academic in the family. It seems the boy had subjected his parents to a series of minor crises of the sort that teenage boys are especially good at fomenting, topped those off by spray-painting some insult or other on a local judge's garage door, and been banished, all other alternatives failing, to a state university in Utah. We concurred, of course, laughing that this wretched behavior merited eye-gouging, or worse, exile from the Ivies and near-Ivies. Then, having adjourned, we gagged and God-awfulled our ways to our respective rooms in the civilized world of West Philadelphia. Once alone, we thought with chagrin of that sassy boy who had been condemned to the wilderness, and in our private catharses we were glad that we were not he.

Edge of the Earth

But seven years later, I, too, fell off the edge of the earth and landed in Utah, rather more by chance than by the intervention of angry gods or angry parents. To say that I find life here different, even after twelve years, would be an understatement—but neither do I think of it as banishment. Unfortunately, many people from my east-coast establishment past do. And worse, so do many academics and government officials.

Let me explain. In our first years here, my husband and I hosted numerous visitors, but that was during the nuts-and-berries decade, when getting back to nature required something more than a stroll down the Boardwalk at Atlantic City. Later, we bedded-and-boarded an occasional skier who wanted to do some deep-powder bragging. But eventually, visits to the Rockies gave way to trips to Disneyland or Disneyworld, depending on the traveler's place of origin, and we were alone. Friends who used to stop in were still traveling coast-to-coast, all right, but stopovers in Utah had become costly and inconvenient. We were, they lamented, "off the beaten path."

Until recently, our isolation hasn't bothered me, because it has given us an excuse to travel to California or New Jersey from time to time, and by one means or another, we do keep in touch with family and friends on both coasts. In fact, it didn't strike me as much of a problem at all until I tried, along with a teaching colleague, to engage speakers for a public lecture series at our college a few quarters back. Then it became a real obstacle.

Speaker Regrets

Armed with a sizable endowment and a wealth of great ideas, we brainstormed, gathered data and addresses, and began contact-

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ing possible speakers. Many academics we spoke to were cordial but unable, they regretted, to undertake so strenuous a trip. Yes, strenuous was the exact word. "That's strange," thought I. "The Donner party had a strenuous trip. Bogart and Hepburn in The African Queen, maybe. But a flight from Boston to Salt Lake City and a two-hour drive strenuous? Get real." What they were really saying to us was this: "I can't undertake a trip to nowhere, and that is where I think Utah is." Every time I heard such a refusal—and I heard many—I slid down my memory into that dorm lounge of seventeen years ago.

But strange demurrers were kinder, really, than some of the others we got which were not even that straightforward. A couple of potential speakers tentatively accepted and then withdrew from the program. One wrote us saying that she was going to Turkey, instead, and added, "Perhaps, if you can schedule my lecture for winter term, January through March, that would be better all around." "All around," I guess, doesn't include Utah, where travel can be, well, strenuous in January through March. Frankly, I found that one arrogant in addition to disappointing, because its unspoken premise was, "I'm sure you are so desperate for speakers that you can rearrange your entire academic calendar simply because I found something more interesting to do." Another—this a government official—kept us waiting for two months, during which we received some very encouraging correspondence, and then declined because of "schedule conflicts." Period. By that time, I was anticipating another disappointment, anyway, so I took it rather better than I had thought I would. But again I saw a hidden agenda: "Spend time in a sparsely-populated, securely Republican state during an election year? Not this kid."

Unenfranchised?

Were we just unlucky? Not according to an item in the New York Review of Books. While the Boston-New York-Washington lecture circuit is still pretty sound, more and more the trend among those traditionally on the lecture circuit is to wait for audiences to come to them. In Washington, lecturers like nothing better than to book conventions, where they can command enormous speaking fees and avoid having to travel. That's fine for all the manufacturers, mail carriers, and merry-makers who descend on Washington each year for national conventions. But what about the rest of us? Where does that leave the unenfranchised—the students of Utah, for example—and many other citizens?

Nowhere. And there are plenty of nowheres in this country. I suspect Alabama is one; I am certain Nebraska is. And so many places in between. More often than not, those people who fly coast to coast (or even Turkey) without a second thought consider a trip to the interior thirty-odd states akin to a cruise into the heart of darkness: strenuous, and ultimately, disappointing.

Neither Dead Nor Boring

Meanwhile, for what it is worth, I would like it well noted that we of the interior are neither dead nor boring. And we didn't check our brains at the state line, either. To the extent that we understand two things—that there is value in meeting and talking to new people, and that airplanes fly into Utah as well as

out—I would even venture that we are less provincial than many of our eastern colleagues. We who teach here, particularly we at the community colleges, would like more frequent contact and exchange of ideas with our fellow scholars and with government representatives. More importantly, we would like our students to have access to these same individuals. To the extent that we are able to take advantage of programs such as state tours by great authors sponsored by Utah Endowment for the Humanities, we have access. But when we try to sponsor a program that doesn't meet UEH guidelines or doesn't dovetail with other academic institutions' calendars, we find our options far more limited than they ought to be. Our only recourse seems to be to incorporate, sell memberships, and offer tours to the coasts. Anyone for a Club Nowhere tour to Washington?

A Nation of Coasts

The Louisiana Purchase and Manifest Destiny to the contrary, this nation has become a nation of coasts. The airlines know it; academics know it. Everyone knows it. Even I knew it nineteen years ago, when I was smart.

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